

# one for the runners

*by* Anthony M. Powers

it always takes too long to figure it out  
and before you know what you really are  
there's a long line of bodies lying in your wake  
all convulsing, their faces turned away  
and you can't go back because you know  
they'd kill you if you did  
so you keep moving forward  
because there's nowhere else for you to go  
eventually you forget to look over your shoulder  
and everything seems fine again  
then one night you wake up in a cold sweat  
and all you can think is "what the hell happened?"  
and it all turns into a long list of maybes  
like maybe i should have tried harder  
maybe it was me and not the other way around  
maybe i am the fucking devil  
maybe i'll die alone  
and there's nothing that fixes it  
and you just keep going going going  
and you should have bought shoes with better support  
instead of wearing those stupid Chuck Taylors  
every waking moment of your life  
and you even though you've never stopped  
for more than a few moments here and there  
you're completely out of shape  
and the further away you get  
the closer it all seems  
and you can't remember what regret means anymore  
and the more it breathes down the back of your neck  
the stale breath of that goddamn monkey on your back  
it smells like cigarettes and lipstick and old books

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Available online at *«<http://fictionaut.com/stories/anthony-m-powers/one-for-the-runners>»*

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and then you're choking on it  
you're choking  
choking  
and it all caves in  
and in the moment  
your face turns blue  
the maybes disappear  
and choking  
i should have tried harder  
it was me and not the other way around  
i am the fucking devil  
i'll die alone  
choking

